

## Tom's Musings — The 2017–2018 Season: A Recap

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The 2017–2018 XC ski season is fast coming to a close. It started slow and cold, and finished with satisfied smiles all around. Man-made snow dominated early on and most of the natural snow came midseason. But the point is that the natural snow came.

The grinding season was an active one. Optimism is always strong before the snow flies and that optimism was well reflected in the steady stream of skis to be stoneground all fall and into early winter. Maintenance grinds and refresher grinds piggybacking on race service waxing monopolized during the race season.

Early on, grind testing required an extra amount of scrutiny with 12 new and 2 established ideas needing to be screened and weaned. Testing began with 10 skate and 4 classic grind ideas. Starting in the middle of December, four weeks were spent grind testing in different locations, snow types, and temps. Eventually, that group was whittled down to four grind menu selections, and a couple of off menu grinds. It is interesting to note that, of the grind ideas that did not make the cut, some remain good ideas to continue exploring. They ran very well, but in narrow ranges. With more testing, these grinds could get included in the off menu. For now, what we offer on our stonegrinding page reflects the successful broad range grinds tested. Our focus is, but not limited to, grinds that run from 35 degrees to a bit below zero.

Going forward, we will continue some late season grind testing—the ideas never stop. We will get the Finn Sisu group together for a couple of breakfast meetings to talk about products for next season. And, most importantly, we will talk about the past season's success with our race service waxing and pat some backs. We will also talk about grind testing that led to the success of what we ultimately put on our customers skis—and pat the backs of those testers. Last but not least, this time of year is a great opportunity to give a shout-out to our employees for all the hard work put in. Again—thank you!

Our stonegrinding remains open for business all off-season long. If you have grinding questions during those off-season months, it's best to email me at [tom.novak@finnsisu.com](mailto:tom.novak@finnsisu.com).

— Tom Novak, Head Stonegrinder at Finn Sisu